

counsel for multiple Democratic leaders on the Federal budget, stretching from Leader Daschle to Leader Reid to me. In that short time, Bruce wasn't short of legislative achievement, from negotiating the balanced budget agreement of 1997 to blocking the privatization of Social Security in 2006, from shepherding health reform through the Senate to passing the financial rescue bill after the crisis in 2008.

One of our most distinguished Senators would be proud of that record. Their name would be in lights. Bruce did all of that and much more in his, as I said, quiet, steadfast, brilliant dignity.

I have never sat on the Budget or Appropriations Committees, so when I became leader, having his experience and wisdom was incredible. I have met no one who could take these complex issues and put them in terms that even someone like myself could understand, not being an expert on those things. He was able to understand the big picture and never get caught in the minutia, although he knew the minutia extremely well.

When you ask Bruce's opinion on a matter, he presents it so succinctly and persuasively that you know it is the right answer in a matter of minutes, until he decides to play devil's advocate against his first opinion and convinces you of the opposite because he is one of those staffers who has never had an ax to grind. He said: Let my Senators know both sides, and let them decide.

But we knew both sides so well and so lucidly because of Bruce's ability to take these issues and help us understand them.

He can juggle so many variables in his head at once. He can weigh the pros and cons. He has an instinctive knowledge of how to deal with the tradeoffs, and he can keep it all in a simple way.

He is a modest man. He has sat at the same desk in the Capitol for 14 years. Every day, he brings his lunch—peanut butter and jelly sandwiches—and he leaves the office at almost the same time every night to have dinner at home with Janis, his beloved wife.

Senators get the spotlight and the credit when our initiatives succeed, but so many initiatives would never have succeeded without Bruce King. Bruce, through the years, deserves an ocean of credit for his work. He would never claim a drop of it because he is a humble man.

For all his expertise, he is humble, kindhearted, and thoughtful. Everyone likes him. In all the years he has worked here, I never heard a single person say a single bad thing about him. That is a pretty good tribute in a place like the Senate.

Bruce's departure will be a loss to his friends and colleagues and to the Senate as a whole and, of course, to my office.

There is only one bad thing I can say about him. He switched his allegiance from the New York Mets to the Nation-

als. The good news is that he will be able to catch some more games with Janis, his son Aaron, and his daughter Liana.

Bruce, you are a blessing to our office, to the Senate, and to the country. We wish you the best.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, to the Democratic leader and Bruce, who is on the floor, congratulations on behalf of all the Republicans in the room.

Come down to Atlanta and watch the Braves play the Mets. We would be happy to have you anytime. Thank you for your time here.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. President, I will be very brief. Two things happen at this time of day every day in the Senate and only two. The first is that the last person having their say finally gets up and says it, which means that you all have to listen to me for a minute. When the last person speaks, they don't tell you anything new. They tell you what everybody else said in a different way. You get to hear a small speech about that.

The other thing that happens is that SHELDON WHITEHOUSE comes to the floor and talks about global warming. That happens every day. SHELDON hasn't been down here. I don't know if he is sick. I don't know where he is. I am going to replace SHELDON for a minute.

Every day goes by, and we ought to talk about climate change and things like that. I am going to talk about disaster relief, which ties right into climate change. I am not a global warming guy, except to say I think it is going on. It has been going on since the planet was created. It will be going on long since we are gone. How tough it is depends on our dealing with it—how we sequester carbon, how we manage carbon, and how we have businesses and industries find new ways to fuel their industries and fuel their mechanisms, and things like that.

Tell SHELDON when you see him that I came down to talk about how we do need to address these things. It is all of our responsibility. We can address it in a positive way, just like we did in the Montreal Protocol, where 25 years ago we got rid of fluorocarbons that were drilling a hole in the atmosphere and causing us to have terrible cancer of the skin.

Tell SHELDON I have listened to him. I heard some of his great speeches. Mine is not nearly as close to how good his are. I wanted to make sure a day didn't go by without our saying what SHELDON says.

I want to talk about the disaster bill that Senator LEAHY, only a few minutes ago on the floor, talked about, and I want to talk about the urgent job we need to do in the Senate.

We had terrible disasters in the South and Southeast 3 years ago. We had hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes. Billions of dollars were lost in South

Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and other locations. We failed to meet the disaster demands that we have to help those farmers and ag producers and business and industries to get back on their feet.

We now have a dire crisis. We have an emergency in the Southeast. It is time we got the disaster bill that we have been trying to pass for a year passed. We had it as a rider twice. We had it as a rider on the bill that was going to end the shutdown. At the last minute, it got negotiated out of the picture, not because it was a bad bill but because nobody would leave it in there and it did free up some money.

We have until March 15 to get it done. If we don't, there are going to be farmers in most of the Southeast who are going out of business. Industries that this Nation depends on will be terrible. You will pay way too much for your food. I don't know about you, but if you don't have nutrition to go with the energy you need, you don't have anything.

I am here to plead with every Democrat and every Republican that when we get the bill to the floor—and it will be some time before March 15—to support the disaster relief bill for the Southeastern United States and for Puerto Rico. The Democrats wanted so badly to add Puerto Rico to it, and the President signed off on that part. So we don't have a problem with the executive branch. I ask you to support all of the other provisions in it to see that those who were so badly damaged get their relief.

Let me tell you what that relief is. I am not talking about a handout. As an example, I am talking about the pecan industry that is housed in my State of Georgia. It is a tremendous industry in Asia. It is a tremendous export in the United States, with a tremendous balance of payments which contribute to our country. Well, 70 percent was wiped out. It takes 15 to 20 years to replace a pecan orchard. They have to start growth from a seedling to be a full, maturing tree to produce the crops to get to the marketplace.

Some of our crops are annual crops. A lot of them are long-term longevity crops. It is very important that we get them back on their feet. We will reclaim our place in the marketplace, but if we don't, somebody will take it away from us. Maybe it is Egypt, maybe it is India, or maybe it is somebody else.

I am down here to say that climate does change and we can do something about it by addressing carbon. And the economy changes. We can do something about it by helping industries.

When disasters come, if they are not responded to quickly and resolutely, they end up causing big losses to everybody in business, in productivity, and in our industries.

I want to ask everybody on the floor to please join me—hopefully, before the 15th or at least by the 14th of March—

to support the disaster bill that passed. Senator SHELBY, Senator LEAHY, myself, Senator PERDUE, and Senator RUBIO, and many others worked very hard on this to bring it together to get the pieces that were missing in place.

I want to thank, particularly, Senator SHELBY and Senator LEAHY for the time they and their staff have given us in the last couple of weeks to try to recover from the vote 2 weeks ago, when we lost what we thought was a solution to this problem.

Mr. President, I appreciate the time on the floor.

I yield to the distinguished Senator from Delaware.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I want to recognize the wisdom and insight from my friend and colleague from the great State of Georgia. We have unmet disaster needs in this country. I look forward to working with him to achieve the relief of the disaster impacts on the Southeastern United States and other States.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about climate change—to talk about something that is a pressing and real problem that affects everyone in this country, and, in fact, in our world. It is a challenge that we can't afford to ignore any longer because the health of our families, our economy, our environment, and even our national security, quite literally, depend on our ability to address it and address it promptly.

After a year of recordbreaking extreme weather in 2018—when we saw rising average temperatures fuel California's deadliest wildfire season on record, when Florida was faced with the strongest hurricane ever to reach that State's panhandle, and when farmers in Delaware and across the country faced challenges due to severe flooding and drought—it is clear that we can't afford to sit back and do nothing about climate change while the American people pay the price.

The costs of our inaction are real—real in human suffering, real in disaster recovery spending, real in lost economic opportunity, and real in the burden borne by our Armed Forces around the world.

Yes, there is a clear link between climate change and national security. The Pentagon has consistently pointed to climate change as a real national security threat that will make the military's job around the world harder. National security leaders from across administrations, both Republican and Democratic, have warned that climate change acts as a "threat multiplier," increasing global instability and weakening fragile States as climate change leads to more extreme weather events and scarcer food and water resources.

In many ways, these findings echo themes about climate change that we already know—that it is already happening, that it continues to get worse,

that it is going to cost us dearly, and that we can do something about it. It is that last point that I want to focus on. We can do something to stop the disastrous impacts of climate change, so long as we recognize it and work together in a bipartisan way to develop, take up, debate, and pass meaningful legislation that can make a difference.

Democrats have a broad range of bold and new policy proposals and of tested and fully developed policy proposals to address climate change. Many of them are bipartisan.

I wanted to come to the floor today to talk through 4 different bills that I have cosponsored—some that are relatively new and some considered across several Congresses—that are positive, constructive steps forward we can take to address climate change.

The first, and probably my oldest bill in this field, is called the MLP Parity Act—a catchy name, I know. It has five Republican colleagues who have cosponsored it now over three Congresses. This bill expands to renewable forms of energy, to carbon capture and sequestration, and to renewable and so-called clean energy a popular and long-established tax tool for financing energy projects that the oil and gas and pipeline sectors have enjoyed for decades. It would level the playing field. It would stop picking winners and losers in terms of energy tax policy. It would be, literally, an "all of the above" energy financing strategy. If enacted, it would be the first permanent change for the financing of clean energy projects in the U.S. Tax Code—potentially, worth billions of new private investment in renewable forms of energy.

It is also cosponsored by the Republican chair of the Energy Committee, Senator MURKOWSKI, the Republican chair of the Banking Committee, Senator CRAPO, and three other colleagues from across the country. We have five Democrats and five Republicans. It has had a hearing in front of the Energy Committee and a hearing in front of the Finance Committee in previous Congresses. This is the sort of solid, scored bipartisan bill that would be a meaningful step forward in addressing climate change.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I have introduced the IMPACT for Energy Act to create a private foundation to support cutting-edge energy research and technology commercialization. Why would we do this? What am I talking about?

Well, a guy named Bill Gates, one of the greatest inventors and innovators in American history, wants to deploy private investments and foundation investments alongside the Department of Energy, in partnership with a lot of other individuals, to significantly accelerate the cutting-edge research being done at our National Laboratories through the Department of Energy.

This is a tool that several other Federal Agencies already have. It is a so-called private foundation that allows

them to marry up private sector dollars—foundation dollars—with Federal dollars to leverage greater impact. This private foundation can go out and raise that additional money and add it to the energy R&D already being funded by the Federal Government.

I also want to applaud the hard and bipartisan work of my colleagues, led by Senators MURKOWSKI and CANTWELL on the Energy Committee, on a comprehensive energy bill with a wide range of policy ideas that can move us forward. It has several components that I contributed and that would help to address climate change. I very much hope that in this Congress we can finally take up this bipartisan bill and see it signed into law.

Last, but in some ways most importantly, I want to mention a bill I offered at the end of the last Congress with my friend and former colleague, the Senator from Arizona, Jeff Flake. Despite our very different ideological, cultural and contextual backgrounds—we are from different States, from different faiths, and from different perspectives on the role of government and society; he is a real conservative, and I am a progressive Democratic—we still managed to come together and introduce a bill that addresses the cost of ignoring climate change and the impact it will have on the people in our home States.

We offered the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. It is a commonsense bill to achieve significant and sustained emissions reductions and to help to mitigate the worse impacts of climate change. Our bill would accomplish this by using a free-market approach to pricing carbon pollution that would spur economic growth and put money back in the pockets of American taxpayers. Similar legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by a bipartisan coalition. I look forward to reintroducing this bill in this Congress.

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act should be the centerpiece of a robust, bipartisan climate agenda because it aggressively tackles emissions while optimizing economic growth and income for working families. We estimate that our bill would reduce emissions by 90 percent by 2050, while creating as many as 2 million net new jobs in the next decade.

I believe this is an efficient way to use market forces to address the very real problem of climate change while creating jobs and opportunities for American workers. Frankly, an outright ban on nonrenewable sources would be inefficient and disruptive to workers from all sectors, but, in particular, across the building trades and other vital sectors of employment. In contrast, sending a strong market signal in favor of lower carbon or carbon-neutral energy would spur investment and growth in these technologies by the private sector and lead us toward a lower carbon future through competition.